



WaterFest: A Super Splash Smash

With the mercury rising and humidity far from falling, nearly 4,000 children, teens, parents and grandparents cooled off and learned something about water conservation and environmental protection at WaterFest 2003. The day long water education outreach festival, held March 8 at Coconut Cove Waterpark and South County Regional Park in Boca Raton, was presented by the South Florida Water Management District.

“WaterFest was a resounding success,” said Jo Ann Hyres, SFWMD Public Information Director. The event was promoted across the region, and parents and their children were invited to take part. Many families came on their own, while other groups arrived together. “We arranged for buses to bring hundreds of children and families from underserved communities to enjoy WaterFest,” Hyres added.

WaterFest featured 21 hands-on water education activity stations, ongoing live music and entertainment, food and refreshments, prize giveaways, plus free admission into the popular waterpark. Before a child or family could make a splash in the waterpark’s slides and plunge pool, they had to complete a learning game. Each child was given a “Water Bingo” card. Each bingo square represented one of the 21 educational activity stations. Once the card was stamped at 10 or more activity stations, each card-holder received an admission wristband into the waterpark.

In addition to the South Florida Water Management District, WaterFest 2003 sponsors included Visit Florida, Palm Beach County Parks and Recreation, Solid Waste Authority, Palm Beach Community College, the City of North Miami Beach, Summerfield Suites by Wyndham, Camp Dresser & McKee Inc., Radio Disney, WPTV News Channel 5, WHQT HOT 105, WXEL FM/TV and WEDR 99 JAMZ. Many in-kind sponsors donated bus transportation, advertising, promotional materials and prizes.



SFWMD Lauded for Increased Minority Spending

Expenditures with MBEs up 168%

David Struhs, Secretary of the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, has commended the South Florida Water Management District for increased supplier diversity in support of Governor Bush’s One Florida Initiative.

For the 2001-2002 reporting year, the District expended nearly \$65 million with Minority Business Enterprise (MBE) firms – an increase of 168% from the previous year. “Your commitment to this effort is making a difference,” said Struhs in a March 7 letter to Executive Director Henry Dean. “Thank you for your support and continued interest in this important initiative.”

Changing the Way We Do Business

At the District, we continue to move toward an improved and effective procurement process that meets the needs of the business community and the District, while ensuring the best possible benefit for the public. The key goals and objectives of this commitment include:

- Spread the work
- Increase Minority Business Enterprise (MBE) participation
- Simplify the procurement process

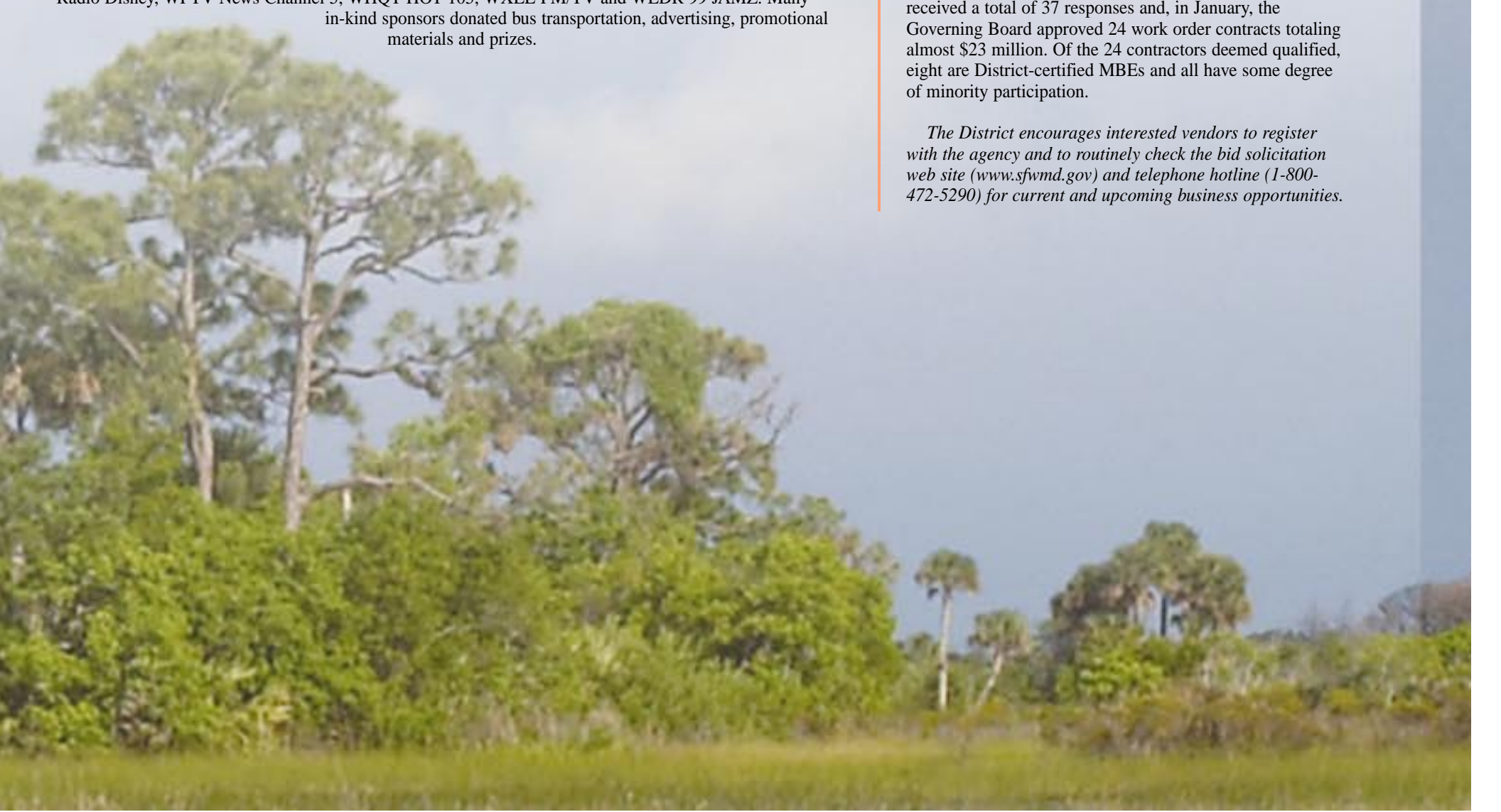
By putting these strategies into place, we are literally changing the way we do business. One successful example of this new way of thinking involves our Environmental Monitoring and Assessment department.

Instead of issuing multiple Requests For Proposals (RFPs) to meet a myriad of science and engineering support service needs, District staff put in a lot of up front work in order to take a different approach: Issue one omnibus-type solicitation designed to establish a pool of contractors to perform on an as-needed basis.

The Governing Board endorsed the concept and directed staff to expand outreach efforts into the business community and to also solicit feedback from the targeted industries prior to issuing the single RFP.

Long months of staff work – combined with expanded outreach and pre-solicitation input – paid off. The District received a total of 37 responses and, in January, the Governing Board approved 24 work order contracts totaling almost \$23 million. Of the 24 contractors deemed qualified, eight are District-certified MBEs and all have some degree of minority participation.

The District encourages interested vendors to register with the agency and to routinely check the bid solicitation web site (www.sfwmd.gov) and telephone hotline (1-800-472-5290) for current and upcoming business opportunities.





April/May 2003

Regional Water Management 101

Understanding “the system”



If you’ve lived or traveled through central and south Florida, you’ve probably seen some part of the massive water management system made up of hundreds of miles of canals and levees, pumping stations and other water control structures as well as lakes, rivers and a variety of natural areas. Many of the features of the system are literally marked with big blue and white signs bearing a smiling, bright green alligator – and sometimes, designations which seem somewhat mysterious such as C-111 or S-5A.

Also in this issue...

*A System Checklist
A Shared Responsibility
The Silent Giant
Board Appointments
LWA Debuts
WaterFest 2003
Business Improvements
From the Ground up
Ask Freddy*

What is this regional water management system and why do we need it?

A look back in time helps explain the importance of the system. Florida was only sparsely populated by the late 1920s, with less than a half million people clustered in what were once frontier towns like Miami or Clewiston. A huge hurricane in 1928 blew inland to Lake Okeechobee, churning and emptying a massive, wind-driven wall of water atop struggling farming communities around the lake and in small coastal communities, killing several thousand people. That led to the construction of a dike around the lake’s shallow shoreline – to prevent future

catastrophes like this.

The region continued to grow, though very slowly because of the great Depression and because air-conditioning and other technologies that would allow this mostly swampy wilderness to be “reclaimed,” or drained for cities or farms, were still being refined. Then, a series of severe droughts, and yet another devastating hurricane in 1947 led state residents and legislators to call for federal help.

The federal government answered that call, sending in the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) to design and build a

public works project that would quickly drain the soggy landscape and make way for new development. A monumental plan of action – called the Central and Southern Florida (C&SF) Flood Control Project – was authorized by Congress in 1948. The following year, the Florida legislature created the agency now known as the South Florida Water Management District (District) to manage and maintain the system being built by the Corps of Engineers.

Most of that construction began in the 1950s, and did not slow until the early 1970s. The system was designed to meet

continued inside

South Florida Water Management District
P.O. Box 24680
West Palm Beach, FL 33416-4680

PRSRT STD
U.S. Postage
PAID
West Palm Beach, FL
Permit #22

peregrina jatropa

sfwmd.gov

APRIL / MAY 2003